

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 SAB-01 ACDA-19 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 EUR-25 AF-10 OMB-01

DRC-01 /161 W

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R 111200Z JAN 74

FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4991

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USUN NEW YORK 3386

UNCLAS CAIRO 177

FROM HOUGHTON

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

BEIRUT FOR DAMASCUS AND BAGHDAD

1. ALL MAJOR ARTICLE IN JAN 11 PRESS DEAL WITH SECRETARY'S VISIT TO EGYPT. AHAM'S HAMDI FUAD, WRITING FROM ASWAN, STATES THAT SECRETARY WILL BEGIN FIRST OF TWO WORKING MEETINGS FOLLOWING HIS ARRIVAL JAN 11; THIS WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A SECOND ON MORNING OF JAN 12. ARTICLE CONTINUES THAT USINT ADMIN OFF SMITH ARRIVED IN ASWAN JAN 9 WITH AN "URGENT MESSAGE" FROM SECRETARY KISSINGER TO FONMIN FAHMY, CONTAINING BROAD OUTLINES OF SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED IN DETAIL BY SECRETARY WITH PRESIDENT SADAT. ACCORDING TO REPORT, SADAT YESTERDAY HELD MEETING TO DISCUSS SUBJECTS WHICH WILL BE DEALT WITH DURING SECRETARY'S VISIT; THIS MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY FAHMY AND COS GAMASY, WHO WERE JOINED LATER BY HAFEZ ISMAIL AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR CABINET

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AFFAIRS, ABDALLAH. (ALL PAPERS HAVE FRONT PAGE PHOTO OF

SADAT WITH ISMAIL, GAMASY, FAHMY AND ABDALLAH.)

2. GUMHURIYYA CONTAINS ESSENTIALLY SIMILAR REPORT, NOTING THAT WASHINGTON HAS INFORMED CAIRO OF BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SEPARATION OF FORCES, BUT INDICATES THAT THESE WERE COMMUNICATED TO FAHMY BY AMBASSADOR EILTS THREE DAYS AGO FOLLOWING AMBASSADOR'S RETURN FROM WASHINGTON. ONE DETAIL IN GUYHURIYYA LACKING IN AHAM IS REPORT THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER WILL RETURN TO ASWAN AFTER MEETING WITH ISRAELI LEADERS IN JERUSALEM SUNDAY.

3. AKHBAR ALSO REPORTS THAT SECRETARY WILL PROBABLY RETURN TO EGYPT AFTER ISRAEL, AND CONTAINS FOLLOWING STATEMENT: "IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT KISSINGER'S TRAVEL TO ISRAEL, THEN HIS RETURN TO ASWAN, MEAN THAT THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE IS MEDIATING BETWEEN THE VIEWPOINTS OF EGYPT AND ISRAEL ON THE SUBJECT OF SEPARATION OF FORCES, AND THE STEPS OF WORK IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IN THE COMING PHASE."

4. FRONT PAGE REPORTS ARE NEUTRAL IN TONE BUT UNDERScore MAJOR IMPORTANCE OF SECRETARY'S VISIT. EDITORIAL COMMENT IS, HOWEVER, RESERVED. AKHBAR STATES THAT DISENGAGEMENT IS A "SIDE ISSUE"; THE CRUX OF THE PROBLEM IS WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS. AKHBAR STATES THAT ISRAEL'S CONDITIONS FOR DISENGAGEMENT ARE "FOOLISH" AND MADE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT EGYPT WOULD REJECT THEM IN TOTO. AHAM ASKS: WHAT HAS PRECIPITATED SECRETARY KISSINGER TO SPEED UP HIS THIRD ME TRIP? DOES THIS MEAN THE ESCALATION OF MILITARY CLASHES HAS CALLED FOR HIS URGENT INTERVENTION? OR IS IT CONNECTED WITH INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE US IN THE LIGHT OF THE WATERGATE AFFAIR?

5. HEIKAL'S FRIDAY ARTICLE DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY DEAL WITH SECRETARY'S VISIT BUT WITH CONSIDERABLE SKEPTICISM CONFRONTS DAYAN'S PROPOSALS. HEIKAL STATES THAT NO ONE KNOWS FOR CERTAIN THE EXACT TERMS OF THE DAYAN FORMULA "APPROVED BY KISSINGER", BUT CONTINUES THAT PRESS REPORTS SUGGEST AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO THE SINAI PASSES IN EXCHANGE FOR A UNCLASSIFIED

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THINNING OUT OF EGYPTIAN FORCES TO EAST OF THE CANAL, A UNEF BUFFER, AND AN EGYPTIAN UNDERTAKING TO CLEAR THE CANAL AND RECONSTRUCT THE CANAL CITIES. HEIKAL STATES THAT THESE PROPOSALS ARE ALL TO ISRAEL'S ADVANTAGE SINCE THEY WOULD STABILIZE THE CEASE-FIRE, RELIEVE ISRAEL OF ITS BURDEN OF MOBILIZATION AND, BY THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CANAL CITIES, DETER EGYPT FROM FURTHER HOSTILITIES. HEIKAL CONCLUDES THAT DAYAN'S STRATEGY IS TO ISOLATE EGYPT AND TURN IT INWARDS

UPON ITSELF.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, PEACE TALKS, PEACE PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974CAIRO00177
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740148/aaaabtmp.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 FEB 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 FEB 2002 by chappeld>; APPROVED <19-Nov-2002 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: n/a
TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, EG, US, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005